

6 July 1976

[redacted]  
Deputy Chief, London Bureau

Dear Art:

Subject: Sourceline Standardization

This letter responds to yours of 31 March 1976 forwarding the FBIS-RBC Working Group's revised sourceline proposals for approval. Your letter was circulated within FCS, AG, DRD, and the Automation Task Force for study. On 20 May a working group consisting of Bill

[redacted] and myself met to formulate the Headquarters position.

I know you, [redacted] and Bob were hoping your letter would wrap this thing up, but we feel further coordination is necessary to clarify certain points and to see if we can reach an accommodation on use of the term "clandestine." The insertion of additional phrases in already agreed upon positions raised some questions, and discussions on some of the old wording raised other questions and concerns which we wish to bring to your attention. Despite this, we are very close to total agreement on all points except the "clandestine" issue. The principles and rules, with questions, comment, and the reasons for concern, are addressed in the order listed in your 31 March letter.

#### I. Basic Principles

1. We agree with the principle, but think the term "monitoring" is too limited, implying that sourcelines should contain no information not monitored from the broadcast. We would like the specifics you supplied in your letter spelled out in the principle. Thus phrasing might read: "A sourceline should contain no information that is not available from station announcements, program content, technical observations, official schedules, and other publications." We are flexible about the final wording, but to avoid any future misunderstandings we would like to insure that the principle recognizes that sourcelines are often based on information beyond that contained in the broadcast.

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2. We agree. We recognize that what constitutes "maximum desirable precision" may be interpreted at times somewhat differently by both parties, but that this will be worked out on a case by case basis.

3. We agree. This one took us by surprise, since we had no inkling that the information we supplied you last year on the definitions of "official, semi-official, and private" had resulted in a change in your working group's position. But after considerable discussion, all agreed your position was more sound than the one FBIS has been following for several years. Thus, we will make no attempt to define the "officialness" of the broadcaster in future sourcelines.

## II. General Rules

1. We agree.

2. This is one of three areas where we had reached previous accord that we would agree to disagree. But our group was puzzled by the additional phrase "or if asked to do so by the other." It was our understanding that sourcelines in these "agree to disagree" areas would be placed on a master list of those that would be rendered differently by each side, with FBIS and BBC editors making the changes as necessary upon receipt of the processed copy. As indicated in our admin exchange on this point, inclusion of this phrase appears to make it mandatory for FBIS field editors to include the beaming information in the sourceline for each processed item, if so requested by BBC. Under such an arrangement, our field editors would have to change the sourceline to meet the BBC preference and our Headquarters editors would have to change the sourceline back again here before publication. Apart from negating the principle underlying this rule, this would bollix our automation plans. The computer will sort and process items by set sourcelines. Sourcelines which deviate from the set format will be automatically kicked into the manual mode for special handling, which means sorting and editing by hand. The system can handle deviations, but not on the scale that would result if rules two, five, and eight are followed to the letter as now phrased. We therefore propose that the phrase "or if asked to do so by the other" be dropped and we handle sourceline beaming differences inherent in rules two, five, and eight in the manner described in the third sentence of this paragraph.

3. This was previously agreed upon, but considerable concern was expressed about how widely this type of sourceline might be applied. When we first agreed to this rule, it was on the assump-

tion use of the joint sourceline would be limited. But several members of our group wondered if this rule might be a Pandora's box. They expressed concern that liberal interpretation of broadcast circumstances could result in overuse, thereby rendering the joint designation meaningless. They cite as examples shortwave relays of programs for domestic audiences in remote areas which can be heard beyond a country's borders being termed external services, or radios in border areas whose material is meant for local consumption but whose broadcasts can be heard clearly in adjacent countries. I personally do not share this concern and assume it will be a nonproblem. I mention it here merely to let you know that these reservations exist in Headquarters.

4. We agree.

5. This is in the same category as rule two.

6. We agree.

7. We are still awaiting the list from the BBC. In agreeing to include the country in the sourceline, we assumed it would appear in conventional sequence of studio location, then country. Our automation plans are geared to this format. Thus, we are against reversing the order unless BBC has a very good reason. Appreciate any light you can shed on this.

8. This is in the same category as rules two and five.


9. We tried very hard to accept your proposal to substitute "location undisclosed" for "clandestine," but were unable to do so. The panel's main (and unanimous) objection to the term "location undisclosed" is that it is generally inaccurate and misleading. A check of station announcements of current and past transmitters in this category reveals all falsely announce or clearly imply they originate in the target country. "Location undisclosed" either ignores or glosses over the fact that these radios are concealing and lying about their locations for some secret or illegal purpose. We think the term "clandestine" more accurately reflects these broadcast conditions. Thus, unless you can come up with a more suitable, all-encompassing substitute for "clandestine," it appears we have another agree-to-disagree situation.

The following information responds to your request for Headquarters' views on sourcelines for telegraph services other than news agencies. We assume you are referring to maritime and diplomatic services. These types of services currently fall into two categories: 1) those whose material is issued as an integral

part of a recognized press agency's output; 2) those which transmit separately, using only diplomatic or maritime identifiers. Examples are: "Moscow Maritime Press Service in Russian," "Rome ANSA Maritime Press Service in Italian," "Quito Diplomatic Information Service in Spanish," and "Belgrade TANJUG Diplomatic Information Service in Serbo-Croatian." Whereas we are comfortable with these arrangements, we are open to suggestions if RNC has serious reservations. We would not object to changing "maritime press service" or "diplomatic information service" if a good alternative exists. We have thought in terms of "Moscow Press in Russian to Ships" and "Quito Press in Spanish to Diplomatic Missions." But the word "press" as opposed to "press service" or "presscast" gives us problems. And leaving out "press" entirely could lead the consumer to believe it is a voice transmission. One thing we are firm on: when such a service is incorporated into a recognized press agency's output, the press agency name should be in the sourceline.

We look forward to hearing from you, as we inch toward final agreement.

Best Regards,

  
Chief, Field Coverage Staff

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